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Psycap and Amotivation to search for a job: the role of need frustration and family support

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This work analyses unemployed individuals' psychological capital (Psycap), and the mediating and moderation developments through which this resource is related with amotivation to search for a job. We tested, in particular, whether need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence mediated the relationship between Psycap and amotivation, by using a questionnaire that was applied to a sample of 298 unemployed people. Additionally, we also tested whether individuals' family support would moderate the negative relationship between Psycap and amotivation to search for a job, and if the strength of the hypothesized indirect effects were conditional on the perception of family support. Results revealed that the relationship between Psycap and amotivation was mediated by need frustration of relatedness and competence. Moreover, family support was confirmed to moderate the relationship between need frustration of competence and amotivation, such that the high levels of amotivation was found in individuals who demonstrated high levels of need frustration of competence and low family support. Ultimately, results have supported a conditional indirect and negative effect of the Psycap on forecasting amotivation through need frustration of competence when levels of family support were high, but not when the support was low. Overall, the results obtained show that need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, and family support embody key elements in explaining how Psycap is associated with amotivation to search for a job.

Keywords: psychological capital, need frustration, amotivation, family support, self-determination theory, deprivation model, and unemployment

Introduction

The Horizon 2020 Challenges, which are part of the European Union Framework for Research and Innovation, resumes the top priorities and the major concerns of the Europe 2020 strategy that are shared by the majority of the citizens. Among all of them, unemployment is tackled as being a crucial challenge for the future generations, because if its rate is high then it can jeopardize the economic growth of each particular country, and the overall European Union. In 2015, the unemployment rate in Portugal was 12,4%. A rate that is lower than the 16,2% registered in 2013 and the 13,9% registered in 2014, however, still higher than the OECD average of 6,8%. It can be seen also that the unemployment rate of the average of the OECD countries, is improving its values, comparing with the 7,9% in 2013 and the 7,3% in 2014 (OECD, 2014). According to this information, and in about two decades, Portugal had moved from being one of the countries with the lowest values of unemployment rate in the European Union (i.e. registering 4% in 2000, and having only Austria and The Netherlands in that year with lower values) to become one of the countries with the highest values (i.e. having only Spain and Greece with higher values, registering 22,1% and 24,9% in the year of 2015, respectively) (OECD, 2014). The constantly growth of the unemployment in Portugal throughout the years have risen social inequalities, and consequently the access to healthcare treatment (Horizon 2020). The unemployment growth in Portugal increased social inequalities that compromise health equity, and in part explains the high prevalence of mental ill health among Portuguese (23% according to the report from the Ministry of Health from 2015), which is a really important factor that needs to be taken into account, because it's a direct consequence of the fact that people are unemployed, and therefore, increases their lack of motivation in searching for a new job. Earlier research has demonstrated that Psychological Capital ("PsyCap" which represents each person's positive state of psychological development and is represented among four intrinsic characteristics of the individual: Hope, Efficacy, Optimism and Resiliency (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007; Luthans & Youssef, 2004) has a positive impact in motivation, and consequently a negative impact in amotivation (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). Individuals who are more hopeful, optimistic, and resilient, and have more efficacy are less likely to be frustrated regarding the three basic needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence, and so much more motivated to find a job. Therefore, a

positive psychological capital is crucial to tackle unemployment, because it will lead to lower levels of frustration, however, there was no empirical evidence on PsyCap on Need Frustration on amotivation. According to Murphy and Athanasou (1999), when people are unemployed or just had the experience of losing a job, it has a negative impact on their levels of psychological well-being, meaning that they isolate themselves, are less willing to be involved in the social activities of the society, and this calls into question the satisfaction of the basic needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, when people that are unemployed are compared with those that currently have a job, the unemployed ones show high levels of psychological distress, especially in the long-term unemployment in which has damaging consequences on the emotional well-being (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1997), as well as lower self esteem and higher levels of depression. Following this reasoning, the “deprivation model” for unemployment has come from studies that indicated that unemployed individuals are less willing to have access to the so called “latent benefits of employment”, and consequently, they have an inferior well-being (Creed & Klisch, 2005), and so feeling more frustrated and less motivated. This paper characterizes the psychological need frustration for the basic needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence as a mediator between Psychological Capital) and amotivation which is characterized by the nonexistence of motivation in searching for a job. Unemployed people are more isolated and they feel less control over their actions, leading to the frustration of needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence, which contributes to amotivation in finding a new job. (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In addition, this paper is also going to focus on the moderated effect of the family support into the mediation effect, meaning that it is going to have an impact, either positive or negative, on how the need frustration of the basic needs (autonomy, relatedness and competence) affect amotivation. The role of the family seems to have a crucial impact as lack of motivation is strongly impacted by the need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, which in turn is highly impacted by the psychological capital of individuals. Following this assumption, Vrućinić (2012) has documented the role of family and social support to unemployment. However, having a family doesn’t mean automatically having high social support, because unemployment can jeopardize relationships within the family, especially due to increasing psychological stress, children’s mental health problems and lack of good performances at school, loss of motivation to find a new job in the future, due to lack of morale and loss of sensibility to human relationships. Therefore,

a positive Psychological Capital aligned with greater and positive family support are crucial to reduce the frustration of the individuals, and so, the amotivation to find a job. This study gives an important contribution to the study of unemployment, especially through the focus on psychological capital and amotivation, and the relationship of mediation of need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence to reduce such adversity. Furthermore, it contributes also to see the impact of family support between the need frustration and amotivation, when individuals are unemployed. So the main idea of this study is to investigate if the family support can mitigate the impact of the frustration of the needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence in the amotivation to search for a new job.

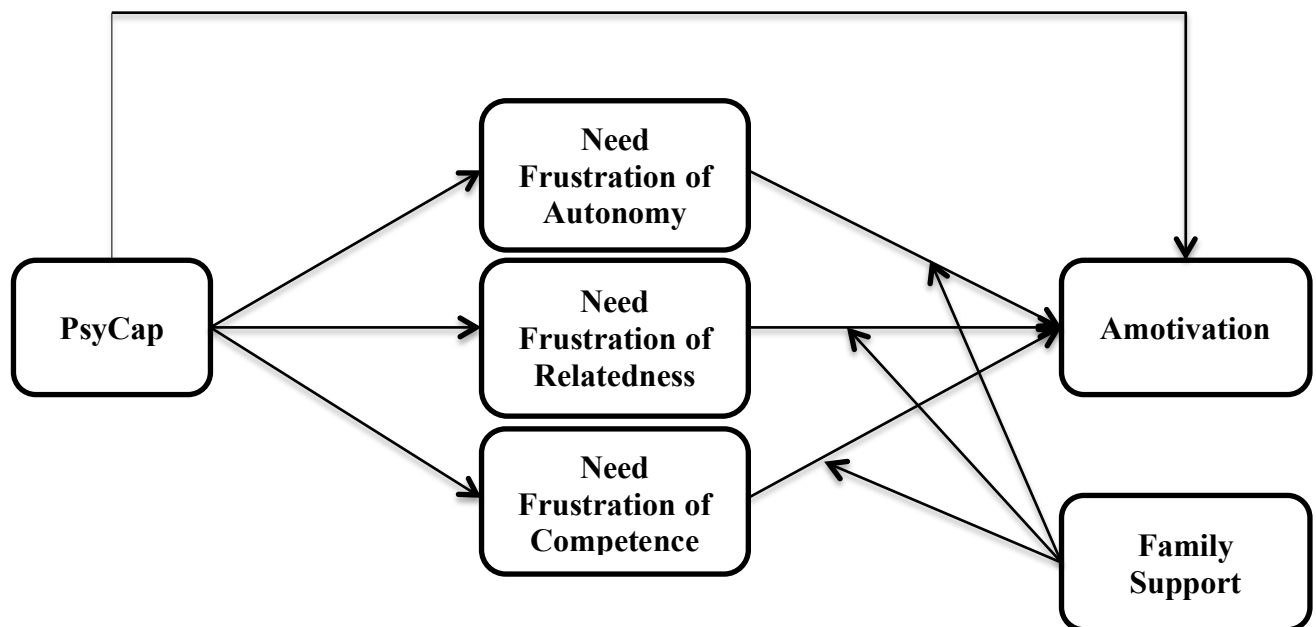


Figure 1. The Research Model

Literature Review and Hypothesis

According to several studies, psychological reflexes, needs, drivers, ability to experience pleasure and pain, perceptions are all really important to boost the behavior of the human beings (Gastil, 1961). However, following Latham and Pinder (2005) reasoning, needs are the essential elements that influence human behavior. According to the Self Determination Theory (SDT) if people want to reach a positive psychological state of mind, they have to fulfill several needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000), named as need for autonomy, relatedness and competence. And according to Welters, Mitchell and Muysken (2014), when people are employed, developing a paid work activity, the three needs mentioned above are satisfied. They can show their

competence at work, develop relationships with other employees and with the job itself, so they can tackle the need of relatedness, and being the job a paid activity, each worker can have its own autonomy in life. Furthermore, SDT defends that if people are employed and working to achieve goals, they build positive psychological mindset, and so they achieve needs satisfaction, and therefore, they are not frustrated, and so more motivated in every life sector and having a more positive psychological capital/ well being. So it's crucial to study how the satisfaction of the needs of the unemployed individuals is affected. Explanations on how unemployment can impact negative psychological capital and lower levels of psychological well being (Murphy & Athanasou, 1999), causing poor mental health, has come from the "deprivation model" (Jahoda, 1982). According to this model, being unemployed contributes to the fact that people have less time structure, social contact, collective purpose, status and activity, which are the five latent functions of employment (Jahoda, 1982). Also related to the theme of unemployment, the role of the family is crucial because it can give material and psychological support for the ones that are unemployed, and give them the right motivation and boost to find a new job, either friends or family members (Mitchell, Billings & Moos, 1982; Cohen & Wills, 1985). When facing stressful situations, such as not having a job and feeling their autonomy, relatedness and competence jeopardized, people with a stronger family and social support are less anxious, stressful and less willing to suffer from a depression, so feeling more motivated to pursue their lives and search for a job (Mitchell, Billings et al., 1982; Cohen & Wills, 1985). Inside a family each individual always receive emotional support, but when a person is unemployed, this feeling of belonging, warmth and material support is even more important and valued in such a situation of crisis (Sarason, Sarason & Shearin, 1986).

Link between PsyCap and Amotivation

The Psychological Capital has emerged from the positive psychology movement (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007), and is made up by four constructs or resources (hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resiliency) (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Youssef, Avolio et al., 2007). Previous research has shown that PsyCap has a positive impact in individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards the challenges that are coming everyday, and also in their performance in

their jobs, or when they are unemployed, they feel more motivated to find a job (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007; Avey, Reichart, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011; Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, & Oke, 2011). It has been demonstrated that PsyCap is about what each individual is or in what wants to become in. It goes beyond human, economic and social capital, because it aggregates the heart and soul part of each individual (Luthans, Luthans et al., 2004). It covers each person's path and faith, and that's why it improves group and individual performances and motivation (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007), because it touches their hearts through optimism, self-efficacy, hope and resiliency, all aligned in order to succeed (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). By analyzing the four constructs of PsyCap more deeply, there is a direct relationship to amotivation. Optimism is related to all the positive emotions and state of mind towards motivation (Luthans, 2002a), hope assumes a great will to succeed and high degree of energy and motivation to pursue a goal and find a job (Snyder, 2000, 2002), self-efficacy is the individuals' ability to surpass an obstacle towards success (Bandura, 1998), or in other words, their confidence in succeed and being motivated (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Being resilient is also crucial, in a way that, the individual develops a positive psychological capital to go through the adversity and turnaround negative situations, and being motivated to succeed (Bandura, 1998; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Luthans, 2002a). On the other hand, amotivation is characterized by the nonexistence of motivation to pursue any activity, like finding a job (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, we assume that Psychological Capital has a negative relationship with amotivation, because all of the PsyCap constructs are driving our minds to a positive state of mind (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b; Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007), and therefore, more motivated people.

Thus, we expect that:

Hypothesis 1: Psychological Capital is negatively associated with amotivation to search for a job

Need Frustration of Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence as mediators

According to Luthans (2007), the positive psychological concepts determined to represent what is called psychological capital or PsyCap include hope (e.g. will to believe when pursuing several goals), resilience (e.g. keep believing it's going to reach success even when facing problems and the adversity), optimism (e.g. being positive about success) and self-efficacy (e.g. being convicted that is going to succeed in successful challenges). When the individuals are positive in all these four constructs of the PsyCap, it can be seen as direct relationship to performance, satisfaction and motivation, therefore, less frustration by the individuals (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). As explained by the "deprivation model" (Jahoda, 1982), individuals that are unemployed are deprived from several important resources, as well as the benefits of employment related to income and psychological needs. However, it is important to understand if individuals with a stronger PsyCap are less vulnerable to this "deprivation period", and therefore, perceive less frustration of needs. Since PsyCap builds on positive and constructive relationships, making individuals suffering less during unemployment tackle unemployment (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). It can constitute a resource against adversity, through hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy, because they feel more convicted about their capabilities and skills, and so less frustrated regarding the needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, it has a negative association towards Need Frustration of Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence because a positive psychological capital improves satisfaction of these three needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Luthans, 2002a, 2002b; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Avoilo et al., 2007). As stated previously, according to Self Determination Theory individuals have to fulfill several needs, in order to feel secure and accomplish psychological welfare (Ryan & Deci, 2000). And if individuals are employed all the three needs are more probably satisfied at the same time (Welters, Mitchell & Muysken, 2014). This theory also discusses the fact that satisfying individuals' needs is crucial in order to develop positive outcomes, so when a person is employed he will benefit from psychological wellbeing (Warr, Jackson, & Banks, 1988; Winefield, Winefield, Tiggeman, & Goldney, 1991), meaning that people are less frustrated in terms of autonomy, relatedness and competence (Welters, Mitchell et al., 2014), and so more motivated either to find a job or to accomplish goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As a result, individuals are more goals oriented and so the satisfaction of these needs, and consequently less frustration, leads to an increase in terms of

performance and motivation in finding a job (Welters, Mitchell et al., 2014). So when need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence are high, it has a positive association to amotivation, because if individuals feel frustrated because they cannot show their competence at work, cannot develop relations with other workers (relatedness and cannot generate income to have their own autonomy, as they simply don't have a job, their motivation to search for a new one is willing to be low (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Welters, Mitchell et al., 2014). They feel stressed, anxious, less confident towards their abilities and skills, depressed or even resigned in the situation they are (Muller, Hicks & Winocur, 1993; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1997; Waters & Moore, 2002). Nevertheless, "studies linking SDT to job search are surprisingly rare" (Welters, Mitchell et al., 2014, p. 35).

Thus, we expect that:

Hypothesis 2a: Need Frustration of Autonomy mediates the relationship between PsyCap and Amotivation.

Hypothesis 2b: Need Frustration of Relatedness mediates the relationship between PsyCap and Amotivation.

Hypothesis 2c: Need Frustration of Competence mediates the relationship between PsyCap and Amotivation.

Family Support as a moderator of this mediated relationship

Studies on unemployment identified several factors such as gender, relationship status, age, and duration of unemployment that decreases the negative impact of unemployment (Paul & Moser, 2009). Following this idea, the most important factor is the role of the family, and its support, in a way that provide psychological resources that work as a key contributor for the psychological well being (Mitchell, Billings et al., 1982; Leavy, 1983; Cohen & Wills, 1985) of the individuals that are unemployed. Family support is, therefore, crucial against adversity that unemployment creates in individuals; however, no empirical studies have been developed.

And the role of the family, is therefore, contribute for the reduction of the feelings of frustration of the individuals and provide them psychological, material, emotional support for them to feel calm and with strength to search for a job (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Sarason, Sarason et al., 1986). For example, the positive interactions established at the individual level, can be reflected at the group level (being a member

of a family) and will provide the opportunity to cultivate the relationships that help people find the resources they need when they need them, and when they are unemployed (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Therefore, family support is really important in favoring psychological safety (at the individual level) and positive interactions (at the family level) will reinforce motivation in finding a job (Vansteenkiste, Lens, De Witte, De Witte, & Deci, 2004; Welters, Mitchell et al., 2014)

Hence, we expect that:

Hypothesis 3a: Family Support moderates the relationship between Need Frustration of Autonomy and Amotivation such that when individuals report higher family support, the association between need frustration of autonomy and amotivation lower when compared to individuals with low family support.

Hypothesis 3b: Family Support moderates the relationship between Need Frustration of Relatedness and Amotivation such that when individuals report higher family support, the association between need frustration of relatedness and amotivation lower when compared to individuals with low family support.

Hypothesis 3c: Family Support moderates the relationship between Need Frustration of Competence and Amotivation such that when individuals report higher family support, the association between need frustration of competence and amotivation lower when compared to individuals with low family support.

Assuming family support moderate the relationship between need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, and amotivation, it is also likely that psycap should affect amotivation through an increase in need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, conditional on family support. Therefore, the following is expected:

Hypothesis 4a: The indirect effect of PsyCap to Amotivation through Need Frustration of Autonomy will be stronger when family support is low.

Hypothesis 4b: The indirect effect of PsyCap to Amotivation through Need Frustration of Relatedness will be stronger when family support is low.

Hypothesis 4c: The indirect effect of PsyCap to Amotivation through Need Frustration of Competence will be stronger when family support is low.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were Portuguese unemployed citizens (N=298) coming from different parts of Lisbon. The questionnaire was made online all over the country and on paper in the city of Lisbon, specially in hospitals, shopping centers, companies of temporary work and outside of the employment institute, which was our major source. The total number of surveys received was 298. The sample comprised 190 female (63.8 percent) and 108 male (36.2 percent) respondents with an average age of 35.80 years (standard deviation (SD) = 12.02). The average time, in months, respondents are unemployed is 20.07 months (SD = 27.64). Concerning the Marital Status of the respondents, the majority is Single (52.7 percent). We found also some respondents that are Married (22.1 percent), in a Civil Partnership (10.4 percent), Divorced (11.1 percent) and Widow (er) (3.7 percent). Concerning education levels, 2.7 percent finished 4th grade, 3.7 percent finished second cycle (5th-6th grade), 11.7 percent finished the third cycle (7th-9th grade), 35.6 percent have finished high school, 3.4 percent had a university frequency, 2.7 percent had a bachelor, 29.2 percent had an undergraduate, 10.1 percent had a master degree, 0.7 percent a post-graduation and 0.3 percent a PhD. Other important fact, was that 40.6 percent of the respondents were unemployed for the first time, 29.9 percent had been unemployed once before, 15.1 percent was unemployed twice before, 8.4 percent three times, 3.7 percent four times, 1 percent five times and 0.7 had been unemployed six and ten times before. Respondents' participation was totally voluntary and the fact that all their responses would remain confidential was communicated straight away before they even started answering the questionnaire.

Measures

Psychological Capital was assessed using the original 24-item from the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007), which were all translated into Portuguese and represented the four constructs of the PsyCap. Example questions were "I feel confident that I can accomplish my work goals" (**Self-Efficacy**), "I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work" (**Optimism**), "At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals" (**Hope**) and "I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work" (**Resilience**).

The Cronbach's alpha of PsyCap is 0.95, and for the consistency of this measure we inverted one of the questions related to PsyCap in the questionnaire. Taking into account Basic Psychological Need Theory, both the frustration and the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence are considered vital in predicting individuals' problems, behaviors and well being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). Therefore, in order to capture the frustration component, we used the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (Chen, Vansteenkiste, et al., 2015), but only the 12 questions related to Need Frustration. Example questions were "I feel forced to do many things I wouldn't choose to do" (**Need Frustration of Autonomy**), "I feel that people who are important to me are cold and distant towards me" (**Need Frustration of Relatedness**) and "I feel disappointed with many of my performances" (**Need Frustration of Competence**). The Cronbach's alpha of these three measures is 0.77 (Need Frustration of Autonomy), 0.80 (Need Frustration of Relatedness) and 0.73 (Need Frustration of Competence). Family Support was assessed using the scale from King, Mattimore, King and Adams (2006). Example question was "For my family it's a shame that I am unemployed"(Cronbach's alpha = 0.83). A simple 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5), and for the consistency of the Cronbach's alpha, we inverted some of the questions related to family support in our questionnaire. On the other hand, Amotivation was assessed with the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS; Gagné, Forest et al., 2010). Example question was "I do not know why I search for a job, it is useless" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.93). Respondents answered on a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Controlled Variables

Gender, age and education levels can be related to the way PsyCap is influenced (Luthans, Luthans & Jensen, 2012), to the way need frustration of the basic needs is influenced (Gropel & Kuhl, 2009) and to amotivation (Gagné et al., 2014). Accordingly, gender was coded as a dummy variable; in which 0 represented a female respondent and 1 represented a male one. Age was controlled as an ordinal variable, which was represented in years.

Statistical Analysis

We used a regression-based path analysis using PROCESS software, in order to test our hypotheses, which is a computational tool for estimating and probing multiple mediators in parallel, interactions and the conditional indirect effects of mediated moderation models (Hayes, 2012; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). PROCESS is a SPSS software macro that allows the test of the indirect effects ab , with a normal theory approach, in which we computed the “Sobel (1982) provided an approximate significance test for the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable via the mediator” (Baron & Kenny, 1986, p 5). In addition, a bootstrap approach to calculate Confidence Intervals (CI) was used, and according to MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams (2004) bootstrapping is recommended. Through the application of bootstrapped Confidence Intervals, it is possible to avoid power problems that can be introduced by asymmetric and other non-normal sampling distributions of an indirect effect. The hypotheses were tested in two interlinked steps, in which we examined, first, a simple Model 4 in PROCESS using 1.000 bootstrap samples, with 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals for all indirect effects. This model also incorporates the multistep approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), in which a series of hypotheses were displayed. The relationship between PsyCap and Amotivation was tested first (H1). Then, Need Frustration of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence were introduced in the model as mediators of the relationship between PsyCap and Amotivation (H2a, H2b and H2c). In addition, we integrated the proposed moderator variable into the model (H3a, H3b and H3c) and we empirically tested the overall mediated moderation hypotheses (H4a, H4b and H4c). Accordingly, the procedures used to test all the hypotheses 3 and 4 were integrated such that we considered the possibility of a statistically significant indirect effect being contingent on the value of the proposed moderator. To test for these Hypotheses, we estimated Model 14 in PROCESS, which accounts for a conditional indirect effect of PsyCap on Amotivation to search for employment through the frustration of the three needs with 1.000 bootstrap samples and with a 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals for all indirect effects. Following Aiken and West’s (1991) proposals, predictor variables were mean-centered, and the conditional indirect effect was analyzed at different values of the moderator variable: the mean, one standard deviation above, and one standard deviation below the mean.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

All means, standard deviations, and correlations of the necessary variables used in this study are presented in Table 1. Following this table, as expected, PsyCap is negatively related to Need Frustration of Autonomy ($r = -0.41, p < 0.05$), to Need Frustration of Relatedness ($r = -0.32, p < 0.01$) and to Need Frustration of Competence ($r = -0.48, p < 0.01$), all supported for different levels of significance. Still meeting up the expectations, the Need Frustration of Autonomy ($r = 0.45, p < 0.01$), Relatedness ($r = 0.49, p < 0.01$) and Competence ($r = 0.57, p < 0.01$) are all positively related to Amotivation, supported for 1% of significance. In addition, also as expected Family Support is positively related to PsyCap ($r = 0.37, p < 0.01$) and negatively related to Need Frustration of Autonomy ($r = -0.49, p < 0.01$), Relatedness ($r = -0.39, p < 0.01$) and Competence ($r = -0.39, p < 0.01$), meaning that the support of our familiar relatives is going to improve individuals hope, resilience, efficacy and optimism, as well as reduce the frustration associated with the basic needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations for all Variables (N=298)*

	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Age	35.80	12.02									
2. Gender (a)			0.10								
3. Number of Times Unemployed	1.16	1.44	0.12*	0.07							
4. Length of Unemployment (b)	20.10	27.64	0.26***	-0.03	-0.07						
5. PsyCap	3.85	0.65	-0.07	0.04	-0.05	-0.05					
6. N.Frust. Autonomy	2.80	0.85	-0.05	-0.06	0.05	0.12*	-0.41*				
7. N.Frust. Relatedness	2.28	0.89	-0.02	0.01	0.10	0.12*	-0.32**	0.63**			
8. N.Frust. Competence	2.33	1.01	-0.21**	0.04	0.11	0.03	-0.48**	0.61**	0.62**		
9. Family Support	3.31	0.71	-0.01	0.05	-0.14*	-0.13*	0.37**	-0.49**	-0.39**	-0.39**	
10. Amotivation	2.29	1.57	0.07	0.04	0.07	0.10	-0.34**	0.45**	0.49**	0.57**	-0.32**

Note: NFrust= Need Frustration

(a) Dummy variable coded 0 if female and 1 if male; (b) variable coded in months

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Test of Mediation

The first hypothesis proposed that PsyCap was associated with less Amotivation to search for a job, as the second hypotheses proposed that this relationship was mediated by Need Frustration of Autonomy (H2a), Need Frustration of Relatedness (H2b), and Need Frustration of Competence (H2c).

Following this, showing in Table 1, and as expected from the literature review,

PsyCap is negatively associated with amotivation to search for a job ($r = -0.34$, $p < 0.01$), thereby these results support H1. On the opposite side, and contrary of the expectations, Need Frustration of Autonomy was not significantly associated with amotivation ($B = 0.12$, $t = 0.97$, $p = 0.33$; Table 2), thereby precluding the test of Hypothesis H2a. Furthermore, Table 2 indicates that PsyCap is negatively associated with Need Frustration of Autonomy ($B = -0.53$, $t = -7.66$, $p < 0.001$), Need Frustration of Relatedness ($B = -0.44$, $t = -5.88$, $p < 0.001$), and Need Frustration of Competence ($B = -0.75$, $t = -9.48$, $p < 0.001$); and that Need Frustration of Relatedness and Need Frustration of Competence were positively associated with amotivation ($B = 0.34$, $t = 3.00$, $p < 0.01$ and $B = 0.58$, $t = 5.55$, $p < 0.001$, respectively). Following this reasoning, we also observed two significant indirect effects of PsyCap on amotivation through Need Frustration of Relatedness (indirect effect = -0.15 ; with 95% CI from -0.32 to -0.05) and Need Frustration of Competence (indirect effect = -0.43 ; with 95% CI from -0.63 to -0.26). Also, the normal theory tests (Sobel tests) confirmed the indirect effects stated previously, through Need Frustration of Relatedness ($z = -2.64$, $p < 0.01$) and through Need Frustration of Competence ($z = -4.77$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, results support H2b and H2c.

Table 2. *Mediation Model*

Steps	B	SE	t	p
NFrust. Autonomy regressed on PsyCap (<i>a1</i> path)	- 0.53	0.07	- 7.66	< 0.001
NFrust. Relatedness regressed on PsyCap (<i>a2</i> path)	- 0.44	0.08	- 5.88	< 0.001
NFrust. Competence regressed on PsyCap (<i>a3</i> path)	- 0.75	0.08	- 9.48	< 0.001
Amotivation regressed on NFrust. Autonomy, controlling for NFrust. Relatedness, NFrust. Competence, and PsyCap (<i>b1</i> path)	0.12	0.12	0.97	0.33
Amotivation regressed on NFrust. Relatedness, controlling for NFrust. Autonomy, NFrust. Competence, and PsyCap (<i>b2</i> path)	0.34	0.11	3.00	< 0.01
Amotivation regressed on NFrust. Competence, controlling for NFrust. Autonomy, NFrust. Relatedness, and PsyCap (<i>b3</i> path)	0.58	0.10	5.55	< 0.001
Amotivation regressed on PsyCap, controlling for NFrust. Autonomy, NFrust. Relatedness, and NFrust. Competence (<i>c'</i> path)	- 0.17	0.13	- 1.29	0.20
Unstandardized value	Effect	SE	LL95%CI	UL95%CI
Bootstrap results for indirect effect				
Effect through NFrust. Autonomy	- 0.06	0.06	- 0.19	0.05
Effect through NFrust. Relatedness	- 0.15	0.06	- 0.32	- 0.05
Effect through NFrust. Competence	- 0.43	0.09	- 0.63	- 0.26
Normal theory tests for specific indirect effects (Sobel)	Effect	SE	z	p
Effect through NFrust. Autonomy	- 0.06	0.06	- 0.95	0.34
Effect through NFrust. Relatedness	- 0.15	0.06	- 2.64	< 0.01
Effect through NFrust. Competence	- 0.43	0.09	- 4.77	< 0.001

Note: N=298. NFrust. = Need Frustration; Bootstrap sample size = 1.000. LL = Lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit.

Test of Mediated Moderation

The results for the moderator effect of Family Support over the relationship between the Need Frustration of the three needs and Amotivation (H3a, H3b and H3c), and the conditional indirect effects of PsyCap on Amotivation (H4a, H4b and H4c) are all displayed in Table 3. Results indicated that the cross-product terms between Need Frustration of Autonomy and Family Support on Amotivation and Need Frustration of Relatedness and Family Support on Amotivation were not significant ($B = 0.05$, $t = 0.28$, $p = 0.78$ and $B = -0.09$, $t = -0.62$, $p = 0.54$), thereby not supporting H3a and H3b, and precluding the test of H4a and H4b. More interestingly, the cross-product term between Need Frustration of Competence and Family Support on Amotivation was significant ($B = -0.31$, $t = -2.25$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Regression results for Mediated Moderation Model (Conditional Indirect Effects)

Amotivation R ² = .41 p<.001	B	SE	t	p
Constant	1.91	0.63	3.02	< 0.01
PsyCap	- 0.09	0.13	- 0.71	0.48
NFrust. Autonomy	0.13	0.13	1.05	0.29
NFrust. Relatedness	0.29	0.12	2.45	< 0.05
NFrust. Competence	0.63	0.11	5.76	< 0.001
Family Support	- 0.04	0.12	- 0.34	0.74
NFrust. Autonomy X Family Support	0.05	0.17	0.28	0.78
NFrust. Relatedness X Family Support	- 0.09	0.14	- 0.62	0.54
NFrust. Competence X Family Support	- 0.31	0.14	- 2.25	< 0.05
Family Support	Effects (1)	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	BootULCI
Conditional indirect effect at = $M \pm 1SD$				
Mediator: NFrust. Competence				
- 1 SD (-0.71)	- 0.65	0.13	- 0.94	-0.42
M (0.00)	- 0.49	0.09	- 0.70	-0.33
+ 1 SD (+0.71)	- 0.32	0.13	- 0.62	-0.11

Note: N=298. NFrust. = Need Frustration; Bootstrap sample size = 1.000. LL = Lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit. All predictor variables are mean-centered.

These interaction effects are represented in Figure 1. As expected, the association between need frustration of competence and amotivation is higher in individuals with low family support. On the other hand, when family support is high, need frustration of competence has a weaker effect on amotivation. With this in mind, we can see that results indicate that the highest level of amotivation to search for a job is found in individuals who report high need frustration of competence and low family support, therefore results supported H3c.

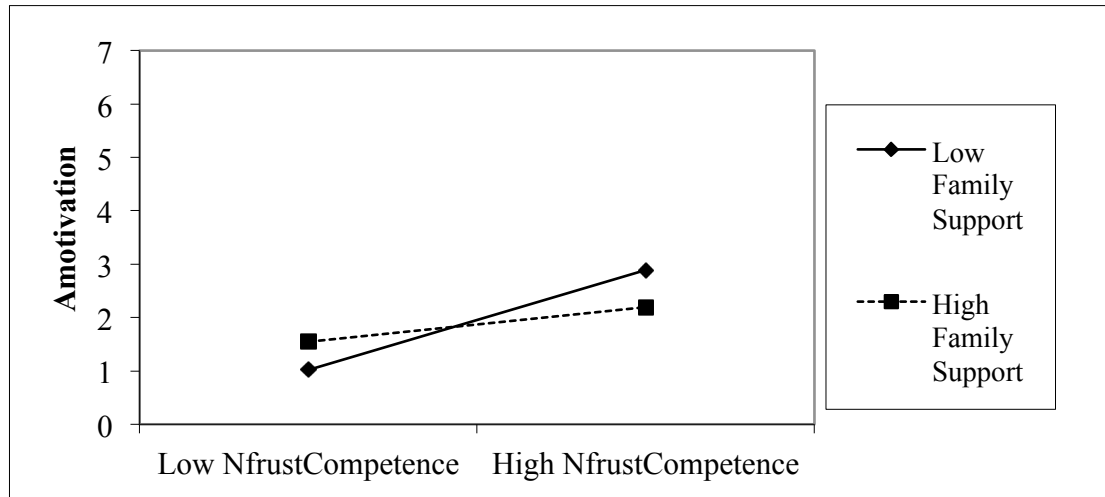


Figure 2. Interaction effects of Family Support on the relationship between Need Frustration of Competence and Amotivation

Although results show that need frustration of competence interacted with family support to influence amotivation, they do not directly assess the proposed mediated moderation. Therefore, we examined the conditional indirect effect of PsyCap on Amotivation (through Need Frustration of Competence) at three levels of family support (Table 3): the mean (0.00), one standard deviation above the mean (0.71), and one standard deviation below the mean (-0.71). Results supported a conditional indirect effect of PsyCap on predicting amotivation via Need Frustration of Competence when individuals reported higher levels of family support (Table 3). They indicated that the three conditional indirect effects (based on moderator values at mean, and +1 and -1 standard deviation) were negative and significantly different from zero. Thus Hypothesis 4c was supported, such that the indirect and negative effect of PsyCap on amotivation (through Need Frustration of Competence) was stronger when levels of family support were higher.

Discussion

The main goal of this article was to study the mediated and conditional indirect effects through which unemployed individuals' psychological capital relate to Amotivation to search for a job. Furthermore, this work also analyzed the mediation effect of need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, and included family support as a relevant moderator variable in the hypothesized mediated relationship. Though, this is the first study to include family support as an effective tool to reduce Amotivation as a result of need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Results have demonstrated that PsyCap is related to Amotivation. It

was found a direct relationship through the combination of the positive psychological constructs (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007; Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007) and three indirect ones via need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence. As expected, individuals with high levels of PsyCap may be more satisfied, and so more motivated to search for a new job (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). Generally, individuals that show high levels of hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience to succeed against adversity (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007; Youssef & Luthans, in press), show less levels of frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, because according to SDT, they achieve a positive psychological state of mind that help them to fulfill these three basic needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, in turn, are positively associated with higher Amotivation to search for a new job. Following this idea, results have demonstrated that PsyCap is indirectly associated with amotivation through need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence. When individuals are unemployed, they are deprived from the satisfaction of the needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence because they cannot receive the benefits from paid work (Jahoda, 1982; Creed & Klisch, 2005). Therefore, they cannot establish a positive psychological well being, so feeling more frustrated because of the non satisfaction of the basic needs, increasing the amotivation to find a new job. And during these situations of crisis, family is normally the one that helps other family members, without even anyone ask to do so, because family can identify the need of help or support just by simply feeling (Sarason, Sarason et al., 1986; Vrucinic, 2012). In this study, we follow the idea that individuals with a stronger family support would be more protected from the negative effect of the need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, because the role of the family members is to provide psychological and material resources, so that the unemployed people feel more supported and more motivated (Mitchell, Billings et al., 1982; Broadhead, Kaplan, James, Wagner, Schoenbach, Crimson, Heyden, Tibblin & Gehlbach, 1983; Leavy, 1983; Cohen & Wills, 1985). However, results indicate that only the positive association between need frustration of competence and amotivation is attenuated when individuals report higher levels of family support. Based on these interaction effects, we can assume that individuals acknowledge that the amotivation to search for a new job they are experiencing is happening in part due to having a negative PsyCap (lack of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy), which in turn also make them feel frustrated regarding the satisfaction of the needs of

autonomy, relatedness and competence, leading also, on the other hand, to the amotivation in finding a new job. Therefore, the active effort of the family in supporting their relatives that are in this situation of unemployment and frustration, contributes positively to buffer the association between need frustration of competence and amotivation. This can be explained by the fact that competence is something that can be triggered by the family, because they can relate the competence of their relatives by showing them other ways of demonstrating that they are competent. On the other hand, relationships established at the workplace and feeling autonomous by earning their own income are two needs much more difficult to be triggered by the family, because are much more difficult to be satisfied when individuals are not employed, and therefore, reducing the positive association of need frustration of autonomy and relatedness in amotivation, not enhancing the psychological well-being in the long term (Fredrickson, 2000). On the other hand, contrary to what was expected, our results demonstrate that need frustration of autonomy is not significantly associated with amotivation. According to SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the frustration of all the three needs should be associated with performance and motivation, however, in our case, for autonomy this is not verified. The absence of a significant association between need frustration of competence and amotivation can be explained because when individuals are frustrated regarding autonomy, they get more motivated to find a new job, because they need to have a paid work in order to have a livelihood and feel useful in the society. So having no financial autonomy is more than enough for not being significantly related to amotivation. Future studies should analyze the relationship of the three needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence regarding amotivation. Also contrary to what was expected, family support doesn't play an important role regarding the association between need frustration of autonomy and relatedness, with Amotivation, and regarding the indirect effect of PsyCap to Amotivation through need frustration of autonomy and relatedness, because family can trigger idea of competence, but not the relationships established at work neither the feelings of autonomy when having a paid work. Therefore, future studies should focus on family support as a separate buffer from social support, and it's association with unemployment and satisfaction of needs.

Limitations

The results obtained from this study should be interpreted taking into account some weaknesses. Firstly, it can be verified a problem of cross sectional design, meaning that, it was not developed a longitudinal study because the data was collected in one single moment, which doesn't allow establishing casual connections between the research variables. Secondly, data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which can cause problems such as common method variance. However, since this study aims to understand unemployed individuals emotional feelings related to PsyCap, needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence, motivation to search for a new job and perceptions of family support, self-reported data seem to be the most appropriate way of applying the questionnaires, so that we managed to capture individuals perceptions and considerations of these variables. Moreover, researchers should be encouraged to develop longitudinal studies and gather information from different sources, so that connections between variables can be effective. On the other hand, regarding the respondents, the sampled group collected was not representative, raising queries about generalization of the results. As a fourth limitation of this present study is the nature of the family ties that couldn't be measured, meaning that we couldn't distinguish if the respondents were referring to family support from parents, siblings, spouse or other relatives or type of social support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). And given the relevance of the deprivation model regarding the psychological well-being and benefits of employment, we were unable to control possible confounding effects of the variables. Accordingly, since each need frustration should be determinant for Amotivation, the moderator variable should be clearly defined as a mitigating buffer. Future studies should, therefore, include variables to provide a more reliable analysis of the role of family as a moderator variable. Researchers should work towards examining this link in an empirical way. Furthermore, picking up other division of needs, like for example the ones from Abraham Maslow (1943) or David McClelland (1965), it would be really interesting to investigate if individuals with those different natures of needs frustrated could be different in terms of the association to amotivation to find a new job, influenced by the support of the family.

Implications for Practitioners and Theory

This study posits important implications for practitioners. From our results, it seems that psychological capital is associated with need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence; however, no empirical studies have related this with unemployment. Therefore, this would be a major contribution for practitioners, because when hiring people, employers should pay more attention not only to the candidates' curriculum vitae but also to their soft skills and psychological capital and promote the development of these additional skills. So it is important to understand which are the factors and actions that help unemployed people to create a positive psychological capital mindset to create a more inclusive and sustainable society, as well as reducing the inequalities unemployment generates (Horizon 2020).

Another important plus of this study is the contribution of the role of the family for the relationship between the frustration of the three basic needs and amotivation, working as a moderator to reduce or increase the strength of this relationship. Would be relevant to study the clear contribution of the support from the family individually in each frustrated need regarding the lack of motivation, and demonstrate if there are some differences in the impact of the family depending on the need that we are referring to.

On the other hand, this study also posits important implications for theory. Using the SDT to explain the amotivation to find a new job has never been studied before, though making the bridge between these two fields would be a major contribution for the literature of unemployment. What SDT defends is that individuals work towards goals and challenges, and not having a positive psychological mindset means frustration of the needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence, and therefore, not motivated to pursue the goals (Warr, Jackson & Banks, 1988; Winefield, Winefield, Tiggeman & Goldney, 1991; Welters, Mitchell et al., 2014), like searching for a job. Following this idea, the relationship between psychological capital and need frustration of the three needs regarding unemployed people, meaning that individuals with positive PsyCap constructs (more hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007)) are referred to have less need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, because with these positive constructs unemployed individuals are willing to overcome this frustration and motivate themselves to find a new job (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). PsyCap is therefore an important

resource and psychological capacity for unemployed individuals, in order to boost performance and motivation (Luthans, 2002b) through the reduction of frustration of the basic needs.

Conclusion

The purpose of our research was in the beginning to build an integrative framework linking psychological capital and amotivation to search for a job literature with need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, and family support. The first conclusion taken was that a positive psychological capital constructs are vital in affecting individuals motivation to search for a job. However, this article advances the existing literature by putting upfront a theoretical model and considering the study of a mediated moderation effects through which positive psychological capital leads to lower levels of amotivation to search for a job. In addition, we feature the importance of family support, and the strategies they use to support their relatives, in order to reduce the positive association between need frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence, with amotivation. Part of those strategies, are considered material and psychological resources, emotional support, feelings of belonging, warmth (Sarason, Sarason et al., 1986). We confirmed that role of the family have the potential to buffer the negative effect of need frustration of competence on amotivation, and condition the indirect effects of Psycap on amotivation through the frustration of the need for competence.

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